

**Madame Chair and distinguished committee members,**

**My name is Pamela Lorenzo. I am the Program Manager of the Visiting Nurse Association of South Central CT. Nurturing Families Network (NFN) Program, funded through the Children's Trust Fund which is now a division of DSS.**

**I am here today to ask you to defeat Governor Rell's proposal to eliminate non-hospital Nurturing Families Network Programs. The Nurturing Families Network is the lead prevention program for child abuse and neglect in our state. Governor Rell's cuts would eliminate a number of vital non-hospital sites which provide valuable parenting services to first time parents. This program began in 1995 as Healthy Families and has grown to include all 29 birthing hospitals as well outstanding agencies that have invested in the well being of our children.**

**Research has shown that Nurturing Families Network (NFN) has significantly reduced child abuse and neglect in our state in the many years of its operation. Our home visitors work very closely with enrolled first time families, over 10,000 per year statewide, to provide the needed child development education, resources and support first time families desperately need. In light of the recession, the increases in poverty and family stress on our vulnerable families will undoubtedly heighten vulnerability to domestic violence, child abuse and neglect. At a cost of \$30,000 per year per substantiated DCF case as opposed to \$3,000 per year for home visiting services through NFN, you can see how the savings to our state add up.**

**This is a critical time for all of the families currently enrolled and those that would be enrolled in the future. I cannot imagine if services**

stopped for those currently enrolled in our program. The many successes of being a part of this program are proven everyday when we have an 18 year old mom graduate high school when she thought she couldn't because she had a baby, and the pre natal mom that hears about our program from a current participant and called saying she needs help because she doesn't know anything about babies.

Please consider keeping the non-hospital Nurturing Families Network sites and keep the Nurturing Families Network program as the only research based prevention program in the state.

I thank you for your time.

*Pamela Lorenzo*

*Program Manager*

*VNA/SCC Nurturing Families Network*

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